

Assembly Bill No. 87

CHAPTER 763

An act to add Section 123302 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to supplemental food programs.

[Approved by Governor October 7, 1999. Filed
with Secretary of State October 10, 1999.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 87, Floyd. California Special Supplementary Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Existing law, the California Special Supplementary Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, authorizes the State Department of Health Services to conduct a statewide program for providing nutritional food supplements to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and lactating women, and infants and children under 5 years of age, who have been determined to be at nutritional risk by a health professional.

Existing law requires the department, under this program, to authorize retail food vendors, by written agreement, to accept nutrition coupons.

Under existing law, the Health and Welfare Agency Data Center is required to manage the implementation of a statewide electronic benefits transfer system that would apply to, among other programs, the Food Stamp Program.

This bill would authorize the State Department of Health Services to implement an electronic benefits transfer system for the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, except that implementation of the system would be conditioned upon completion by the department of a feasibility study and provision of funding for the system in the annual Budget Act.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a vital program for meeting the health needs of pregnant, postpartum, and lactating women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk.

(b) The Food Stamp Program and other federal cash assistance programs are rapidly moving to provide benefits through electronic benefits transfer (EBT).

(c) Redemption of WIC checks in grocery stores is a slow process that inconveniences WIC participants, vendors, patrons of vendors, and store clerks.

(d) The United States Department of Agriculture, which administers the WIC program, states that current WIC redemptions are the most costly transaction retailers undertake in the course of the shopping day, and urges state agencies to incorporate EBT in their management systems to promote cost control and quality of client services.

(e) Various federal, state, and local financial and food assistance programs may require different EBT applications to meet their specific programmatic requirements.

SEC. 2. Section 123302 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

123302. (a) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department may design, implement, and fund an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system for the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Sections 10066, 10067, and 10068 of, and subdivision (j) of Section 10072 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, shall apply to the administration of this section.

(2) The department may not implement any electronic benefits transfer system authorized by this section until the department completes a feasibility study, and funding for the system is provided in the annual Budget Act.

(b) The department shall seek the advice of the Electronic Benefits Transfer Committee, created by Section 10067 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, in implementing this section, and shall obtain the approval of the United States Department of Agriculture, which is the federal governing agency, prior to the establishment of any electronic benefits transfer system.

